

Carolina to the Union despite efforts of Radical Republicans in Congress who sought to remove Reconstruction from the White House and place it in their own hands. Their efforts to reconstruct the South were realized when, in March 1867, Congress passed a series of laws that effectively bypassed the president's office and reorganized "un-reconstructed" states into five military districts managed by military officers. Furthermore, actions by Congress returned the existing state governments to provisional status, subject to changes by the federal government. Another requirement of this new Congressional Reconstruction was the creation of a completely new state constitution wholly in compliance with the federal Constitution, and delegates to the new constitutional convention had to be elected by all resident male citizens over the age of 21, regardless of race or previous condition; exception was granted to remove voting rights from men disfranchised due to participation in the Civil War and for felony convictions.<sup>68</sup>

White North Carolinians viewed the Reconstruction Acts of Congress with skepticism and, seeing no recourse, resigned themselves to the actions of Congress. In 1866, North Carolina fell into the Second Military District along with South Carolina and was under the military command of Major General Daniel Sickles, a New York attorney who had defended the rights of southern states to secede before the war.<sup>69</sup> Because of Sickles' sympathetic views, coupled with efforts contrary to Congressional plans, he was replaced in August 1867 by General E. R. S. Canby. Canby used the Reconstruction Acts liberally and with forcefulness, effectively

reducing the governor's office and the legislature to symbolic posts with no real power over the state's affairs. The end result of Canby's micromanagement of statewide and local affairs was to stir racial strife and create tensions within the Democratic Party.<sup>70</sup> Holden did not give up aspirations to serve as governor and began to work towards that end. He organized groups of men dissatisfied with Worth's actions as governor, particularly his perceived actions to stall efforts to have North Carolina rejoin the Union. Bolstered by his support, Holden spurred the formation of the Republican Party in the spring of 1867. Supported by the national Republican Party and Union League, Holden openly supported the military commanders and Congress in Radical Reconstruction.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 233-240.

<sup>71</sup> Union Leagues were first established in 1862 in Northern states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. The Leagues sought to increase loyalty to the Union and members sought to provide physical and mental support to Federal soldiers by providing supplies. Additionally, the Leagues enlisted African American troops at their own expense, sent teachers southward to educate freed slaves, provided care to blacks in camps and in the North, and, after the war, lobbied for black suffrage. Also called the Loyal League, Union Leagues were organized in areas with high concentrations of blacks in order to coordinate voting campaigns. Most historians agree that the Union League was brought to North Carolina by carpetbagger Albion Tourgee, who introduced the League in Guilford County in 1866 and who served as the statewide organization's first president. Despite Tourgee's traditional status as League founder, two Union League units were in place in Wilmington by April 1865 when they participated in a Lincoln memorial procession. Perhaps formed by native escaped slave Abraham Galloway, these League chapters were well organized by July 1865, as they pressed for municipal appointments for Wilmington blacks. Tourgee was succeeded by Holden in 1867 and membership grew to include not only black males but also white carpetbaggers and native Republicans. The rise of the Union League, and the national support it represented, assisted Holden in the development of the Republican Party. By April 1867, the League was so well organized that

<sup>68</sup> Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 216-219; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 17.

<sup>69</sup> Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 386-387; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 221.